

**Office of the Attorney General (OAG)  
Access & Visitation Grant (Shared Parenting Program) Request for Applications  
(Due April 16, 2012)**

The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement Strategic Plan Vision Statement and Guiding Principles emphasizes the importance of parents providing both financial *and emotional* support to their children. The OAG's Child Support Division echoes this philosophical approach and highlights our support for the emotional connection between parents and their children through the OAG Shared Parenting Program. The Child Support Division (CSD) of the OAG will solicit applications for projects under the Access & Visitation Grant for the Shared Parenting Program beginning February 28, 2012.

Under 42 U.S.C. 669b, the federal government provides to states grants for Access and Visitation (A&V) programs. The grants may be used to establish and administer programs to support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation with their children. Eligible activities include:

- Mediation
- Counseling
- Education
- Parenting plan development, and
- Visitation Enforcement.

Projects funded under this program do not have to be statewide (exception: Hotline projects must be statewide). Entities eligible for funding include: courts, local government or other public entities, and nonprofit organizations with a minimum of two years operating history. Matching funds (cash or in-kind) of at least 10% are required. Throughout the entity's public education materials, web and social media sites, and any media or public comments, the entity must demonstrate a consistent message of cooperative parenting without any bias toward either parent or set of parents. State funds or other funding may be used to expand the federal Access & Visitation Program.

**Local Shared Parenting Program (SPP) Priorities**

**Preference will be given to those proposals emphasizing Texas' priorities for the SPP grant:** early intervention, co-parenting education; alternative dispute resolution services, and visitation enforcement programs offering parents with cases in the IV-D child support program legal, educational, and case management assistance in achieving compliance with parenting time (possession) orders. These priorities include a target population of forming families within the IV-D child support program. A forming family, also called a fragile family, consists of low-income, unmarried parents who share a child and are at high risk of family dissolution. Applicants are encouraged to discuss in detail the particular issues of never-married couples. Approximately 67% of the OAG caseload includes parents who were not married at the birth of their child. The Shared Parenting Program emphasizes mediation, co-parenting education, and resources to support cooperative parenting for never-married noncustodial parents and former partners with child support cases in the IV-D agency (OAG). Applicants should define how their proposals would reach underserved populations. Proposals must include methodology that will be used to report outcomes of proposed services on noncustodial parenting time. Grantees are required to submit monthly demographic information on customers served.

**Statewide Toll-Free Telephone Hotline Project**

In addition to local projects, the Office of the Attorney General is inviting proposals for one project to provide a statewide, toll-free, telephone hotline providing legal information on access and visitation, custody, paternity establishment, and child support as well as legal resources for

parents, and a website with shared parenting information and legal resources. Hotline project applicants will need to demonstrate the ability to provide brief legal services to a minimum of 2,500 callers per month. Services must include:

- paper and electronic copies of legal resources to callers, host an internet website that provides parents with comprehensive access, visitation, custody, paternity and child support information;
- accurate and appropriate referrals to local providers of access and visitation, mediation, and legal services; and adequately track customer satisfaction with hotline and web-based services;
- explanation of Texas' IV-D child support system and processes; and
- explanation and/or interpretation of child support and parenting time court order language in parent-friendly language to callers.

### **Funding Terms**

Contract awards will be by State Fiscal Year. The State Fiscal Year is from September 1 through August 31 of each year. The initial contract term will be from September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013. After the initial contract term, Contractors successfully performing program services may be eligible for up to three additional one-year contract extensions, based on performance and availability of funds. Contract extensions are at the sole discretion of the OAG, which reserves the right to add new federal or state mandates.

The OAG anticipates awarding approximately 10 grants ranging from \$14,000 to \$80,000 for projects other than the Statewide Toll-Free Telephone Hotline Project. Funding levels for the Statewide Toll-Free Telephone Hotline Project will be at the OAG's discretion.

### **Application Deadline**

**Applications must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. CST April 16, 2012.** Applications and/or attachments received after the deadline will not be considered. Applications may be submitted 1 of 2 ways. Do NOT use the US Postal Service. **This location CANNOT accept US Postal Service deliveries.**

**1. By Federal Express or by United Parcel Service (UPS):**

Office of the Attorney General  
Family Initiatives, Child Support Division  
5500 East Oltorf Street, Mail Code 039  
Austin, TX 78741

**2. By email to:**

[OFI.Grants@cs.oag.state.tx.us](mailto:OFI.Grants@cs.oag.state.tx.us); cc: [anita.stuckey@cs.oag.state.tx.us](mailto:anita.stuckey@cs.oag.state.tx.us)

**A. Email your application as:**

- a. Read only files (with electronic signature); **OR**
- b. Single PDF file.

Include all attachments (FY13 and FY14 budgets and performance indicators, support letters, and letter of cooperation with the local child support office (except Hotline applications)). **Contact** the *office manager at your local child support office* (Regional Manager if you serve many counties) for the letter of cooperation. Do not send your version to the office manager.

**B. Print your sent email and retain for your files as proof of timely submission.**

You must submit a Letter of Intent at <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/cs/ofi/index.shtml> prior to the application deadline. Once submitted, you may download the complete application packet.

Email questions about the application process by April 6 to: Anita Stuckey at [anita.stuckey@cs.oag.state.tx.us](mailto:anita.stuckey@cs.oag.state.tx.us) and check the Frequently Asked Questions on this site for answers (posted within 3 business days).